

WINTER SAFETY

This winter has been a mix of rain, snow, sleet, and ice storms. You never know what the weather will bring, so it is best if we are all prepared ahead of time. To prevent slips, trips, and falls, residents should clear walking surfaces of snow and ice, and spread deicer or sand, as quickly as possible after a winter storm. The Town of Windsor Transfer Station does have sand available to town residents. You may have up to 2 five gallon buckets per storm. This is only available during Transfer Station hours, which are Wednesdays 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Fridays 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. If you need assistance, please see an attending employee.

We have compiled a series of helpful hints so that you can try and be safe and enjoy our Maine Winters. **Please remember to check on your neighbors and outdoor pets.**

Snow Shoveling

Pushing and lifting heavy snow can cause injury. The cold weather can increase heart rate and blood pressure. It can make blood clot more easily and constrict arteries, which decreases blood supply. This is true even in healthy people. Individuals over the age of 40 or who are relatively inactive should be particularly careful.

National Safety Council recommends the following tips to shovel safely:

- Do not shovel after eating or while smoking.
- Take it slow and stretch out before you begin.
- Shovel only fresh, powdery snow; it is lighter.
- Push the snow rather than lifting it.
- If you do lift it, use a small shovel or only partially fill the shovel.
- Lift with your legs, not your back.
- Do not work to the point of exhaustion.
- Use boots with traction and/or creepers to avoid slipping.

Don't pick up that shovel without a doctor's permission if you have a history of heart disease. If you feel tightness in the chest or dizziness, stop immediately. A clear driveway is not worth your life.

Snow Blowing

Be safe with these tips from the American Society for Surgery of the Hand and the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons and others on using snow blowers:

- Stay focused while snow blowing. Don't wear loose pants, jackets, or scarves. WEAR boots with traction and/or creepers to avoid slipping.
- Work at a brisk pace. The faster the blades and pace, the less likely the snow will stick. If heavy snow is anticipated, consider snow blowing several times.

- If the snow blower jams, turn it OFF immediately and wait about five seconds to allow the impeller blades to stop.
- ALWAYS use a clearing tool, stick or broom handle to clear the impacted snow.
- NEVER put your hand down the chute or around the blades.
- DO NOT REMOVE safety devices from the machine.
- Do not drink alcohol and use the snow blower.
- Be aware of the carbon monoxide risk of running a snow blower in an enclosed space.
- Refuel your snow blower when it is off, never when it is running.

Clearing Snow from Roofs

Snow and ice on a roof can cause a roof to sag or bow downward. It is the weight of accumulated snow and ice, not the depth that can cause damage. Whenever possible, use methods to clear ice and snow without having to go on the roof. Use ladders to apply de-icing materials, or use snow rakes or drag lines from the ground. Remove small amounts at a time to avoid strain or being hit by falling snow. If you need to go onto the roof DO NOT BE ALONE. Make sure you clear hanging icicles on a roof, they can be dangerous to people and pets.

Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Winter can be a prime time for carbon monoxide poisoning as people turn on their heating systems and mistakenly warm their cars in garages. The National Safety Council recommends you install a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector in your home near the bedrooms. Check or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall. The CDC offers these additional tips:

- Have your heating system, water heater and any other gas or coal-burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year.
- Do not use portable flameless chemical heaters indoors.
- Never use a generator inside your home, basement or garage or less than 20 feet from any window, door or vent; fatal levels of carbon monoxide can be produced in just minutes.
- Have your chimney checked and cleaned every year, and make sure your fireplace damper is open before lighting a fire and well after the fire is extinguished.
- Make sure your gas appliances are vented properly.
- Never use a gas oven for heating your home.
- Never let a car idle in the garage.
- Know the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning:
 - Low to moderate carbon monoxide poisoning is characterized by:
 - Headache
 - Fatigue
 - Shortness of breath
 - Nausea
 - Dizziness
 - High level carbon monoxide poisoning results in:

Mental confusion
Vomiting
Loss of muscular coordination
Loss of consciousness
Death

Symptom severity varies depending on the level of carbon monoxide and duration of exposure. Mild symptoms sometimes are mistaken for flu.

Never ignore a carbon monoxide alarm, and do not try to find the source of the gas. Instead, follow these steps:

- Immediately move outside to fresh air.
- Call emergency services, fire department or 9-1-1.
- Do a head count to check that all persons are accounted for.
- Do not reenter the premises until emergency responders have given you permission to do so.

Remember, if you have an actual emergency; please dial 9-1-1. If you are concerned about the well-being of a friend or neighbor, you can reach out to the Public Safety Dispatcher at 624-7076. We hope you find some or all of these tips we have provided as useful. We would like to wish all residents of the Town of Windsor a safe and happy 2017!

Sincerely,

Windsor Board of Selectmen